

Piute High School 550 North 100 West Junction, Utah 84740

April 24, 2008





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Piute High School 550 North 100 West Junction, UT 84740

April 24, 2008

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 24, 2008, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Piute High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Co-Principals Scott Bagley and Kennedy Sylvester are also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Piute High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Piute High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Scott Bagley	Co-Principal
Kennedy Sylvester	-
• •	•

Counseling

Support Staff

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Sherida Allen Corey Fullmer Leslie Smith
Shauna Bagley Steve Hoagland Kendall Torgerson
Scott Bagley Holly Nowers
Craig Cunningham Dan Springer

PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Piute High School, in partnership with our communities, is to provide a comprehensive, caring educational experience, which will do the following:

- Nurture the unique talents and self-worth of each individual
- Create a socially responsible, lifelong learner who respects self and others
- Develop confidence and capabilities to face challenges of a rapidly changing world
- Promote a positive learning environment which values diversity and the preservation of community values
- As partners, we will provide sufficient resources and a talented, committed staff that create a safe environment where all individuals may flourish

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe in the worth and dignity of each person.
- We believe that all students deserve the chance to maximize their talents and abilities.
- We believe that education is the cornerstone for a quality future and that it is a life-long process.
- We believe that modeling honesty, integrity, hard work, compassion, and service is the foundation of a successful school community.
- We believe that an effective education is a shared responsibility by all persons, groups, and organizations within our community.
- We believe that it is the personal responsibility of students, staff, and community members to diligently seek improvement in knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- We believe that students thrive in a learning environment that is safe, nonthreatening, and that facilitates self-discovery, exploration, and intellectual risktaking.
- We believe that an effective educational system anticipates, plans, and acts in response to a changing world.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

- 1. Students will demonstrate basic foundational skills in essential subject areas and effective and appropriate use of technology.
- 2. Students will demonstrate thinking and reasoning skills in concrete and abstract ways while integrating knowledge and experience.
- 3. Students will learn and demonstrate communication skills expressing oral, artistic, written and nonverbal communication in a respectful manner.
- 4. Students will understand and promote the democratic principles of freedom, justice and equality.
- 5. Students will recognize and demonstrate integrity and dependability and appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts while practicing a healthy lifestyle.
- 6. Students will evaluate and identify personal interests, abilities and qualities as they prepare for higher education and/or a career.

Date of visit: April 24, 2008

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. John Goldhardt, Dixie State College of Utah/Washington County School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Brad Eichelberger, Manti High School, South Sanpete School District

Connie Good, Manti High School, South Sanpete School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

PIUTE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

In 1957 a movement was undertaken to consolidate the two Piute County high schools—one in Marysville, with 94 students, and one in Circleville, with 154 students—into centrally located facility. Assessment of the stability of the existing buildings indicated that they were crumbling dangerously and needed to be replaced. An emotional battle followed, which eventually ended in a move by the Piute County Board of Education bonding taxpayers to finance new construction. This gave the green light to the district to build a new building in Junction, which was completed in 1962.

The present Piute High School claims bragging rights to a recently renovated track, modern gym, auditorium, and snack bar. The library has been remodeled, and now has a computer lab and EDNET classroom. The resource classroom was moved to accommodate a renovated weight room, which has been utilized by students and community members. Students attend grades seven through twelve, traveling by bus from several outlying communities: Marysvale, Junction, Circleville, Antimony, Angle, Greenwich, Koosharem, and Burrville.

Students at Piute High have numerous educational opportunities—not only through the Utah State Core Curriculum, but also through concurrent enrollment offered through EDNET from Utah Valley University and Utah State University. Career and Technology Education students are also active in courses offered through Snow College South in Richfield, receiving instruction in carpentry and auto mechanics. Several students are taking advantage of classes offered through the Electronic High School, providing them with a broader range of curriculum choices.

Extracurricular and co-curricular activities are important to a small school, and cannot be accomplished without the dedication and hard work of teachers, parents, students, and community members. Examples of these activities at Piute High School include Talent Search, Upward Bound, music, drama, athletics, drill team, FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, Sterling Scholars, and National Honor Society.

As the school goes forward in the 21st century, there is a need to address an aging building (nearly 50 years old), add technology, and deal with changing local and international economies.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

There have been improvements with regard to the number of students proficient in core content areas (as measured by U-PASS CRT assessments). The profile also

indicated that nearly 50 percent of the student body qualifies for free and reduced-price lunch. In conjunction with this data, assessment data shows that students from poverty-stricken backgrounds have the lowest levels of proficiency in core content areas.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The profile needs to have more specific data about the students who come from poverty. Taking a closer and deeper look in this area will provide the school with valuable data that can be used for improvement. In addition, it is important to get more parental data. The parent survey data is based upon results from just nine parents. The school needs the perceptional data of a much larger sample that also includes parents of children from poverty (those receiving free and reduced-price lunch).

c) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The self-study is honest. The Visiting Team agrees that the school made a diligent effort in collecting and analyzing data.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Further investigate the correlation of students from poverty and academic content proficiency.
- Continue to collect and analyze data.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?

A consensus-building process is established that involves the school community in defining the school's beliefs, mission and goals. It is recommended that the

present NSSE stakeholder survey be updated, and that the school obtain at least 80 percent participation from all stakeholders.

b) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?

The school's mission, beliefs, and desired results for student learning align in purpose and intent. It is recommended that the school review these statements and make them more succinct.

c) Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.

There are no indicators for the DRSLs.

d) To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?

The mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school, and reflects a focus on student learning as a top priority for the school. However, the written mission is too long. A shorter more succinct mission statement will create more buy-in.

Curriculum:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?

The curriculum is based on "clearly defined standards (Utah State Core) that reflect worthwhile expectations." Efforts are made to "coordinate the curriculum across grade levels," working steadily toward "a shared vision for student learning held by all stakeholders."

b) To what extent does the curriculum engage **all** students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?

School curriculum is focused on "essential knowledge and skills that all students are expected to achieve" (i.e., core competencies, action plan emphasis on all students' reading and writing). Ongoing efforts to reach "deficient" populations ensure that the "development of the curriculum addresses the diverse learning needs of students."

c) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?

Piute High School's self-selected desired results for student learning are identified and given priority in the development of school curriculum. Collaborative efforts do seem "more organic and spontaneous than that of larger communities," as noted by previous Visiting Team.

d) How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that **all** students can reach the intended learning outcomes?

The curriculum is frequently evaluated informally (as per student success on core testing and so forth) and periodically monitored by student survey and occasional formal evaluations (i.e., administrative review of emerging teachers). Development of an "ongoing process…for evaluating the curriculum" is strongly advised.

Instruction:

a) To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?

Classroom observations/teacher interviews revealed varied rates of success in this area. Many teachers appear to design varied instruction "based on the essential knowledge and skills for student learning." In other cases, the Visiting Team saw relatively little evidence of varied instructional strategies.

b) To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?

Continuous improvement in writing practice (using the Six Traits) affects the development of DRSLs. However, many strategies remain informal.

c) To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?

The Visiting Team saw little evidence of a formal professional development program. The Visiting Team recommends that Piute High School develop a professional development program.

- d) To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?
 - Teachers seem generally proficient, knowledge, and reflective. Student well being and success appears to be at the core of instructional efforts.
- e) To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?

The Visiting Team found no evidence of well-defined plan for the integration of technology into curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Many teachers did tell members of the Visiting Team that there is a definite need for better technology in the school.

Assessment:

- a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?
 - This is in the emergent phase. The school has worked to align assessments with State Core content standards by using U-TIPS. However, there are no school-wide expectations or standards for student achievement. There was also very little evidence of school-wide assessments.
- b) To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?
 - Due to the small size of the school, the faculty has the opportunity to engage in informal collaboration concerning student learning data. The self-study process helped to formalize this analysis, but there is no a consistent, school-wide procedure in place for the study of data with regard to specific standards or goals for student learning.
- c) To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?
 - This is an emergent process. Some teachers use data continually to check for student understanding. There is a need for more formal use of data and for the alignment of data to student achievement.
- d) To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?

Some teachers participate in professional development, and the district and USOE have provided professional learning. There is a need for the school to develop a comprehensive professional development plan that includes data mining and using data for improvement.

e) To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?

There is some alignment, but the alignment needs to be much more specific in scope and sequence.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?
 - Piute High School is unique in that there are co-principals who share duties and also teach part of the day. The co-principals are in a position to act as "head teachers" with regard to instructional leadership. There was some evidence of the leadership fostering an academic climate. Improvements have been made since the site visit three years ago, and the Visiting Team believes that the school leadership has the correct focus and vision.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?
 - There is ample evidence of collaborative decision making in the school. The faculty and the co-principals are truly a team and work hand in hand. Decisions are beginning to be based upon data and research. This needs to continue.
- c) To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?
 - The school is managed well. Resources are utilized effectively and with great care. There is more evidence of resources being aligned with the mission, beliefs, DRSLs and action plan. The Visiting Team recommends that school leadership

- make it a priority to align all resources with the mission, beliefs, DRSLs, and action plan.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?
 - The co-principals have made it a priority to involve stakeholders in decisions. Staff members are fully informed and involved. Students are also informed and involved. Parents are continually invited to be involved.
- e) To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?

Piute High School is unique in that there are only 156 students in grades seven through 12. It is nearly impossible for any student not to have several adult faculty and staff members who know and keep track of him/her. In fact, most students will have almost all of the teachers three times or more while at the school. In addition, the counselor travels to the various communities that feed Piute to hold SEOPs, so that parents don't have to travel. This also increases SEOP participation.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

a) To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah

accreditation/school improvement process that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?

Piute High School has developed and implemented an improvement plan; however, it does not closely reflect the format suggested by the State of Utah. The Visiting Team strongly recommends that the action plan be revised.

b) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?

As mentioned above, the Visiting Team recommends that a professional development plan be created.

c) To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

Piute High School has acted on its existing action plan in a conscientious and committed manner. While revisions to the plan seem necessary, the Visiting Team is confident that Piute High School is committed to such improvement.

d) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The administrators, faculty, and staff of Piute High School have established a professional environment in which productive change and continuous improvement appear to be welcome, and in which continued success seems ensured.

e) What significant progress has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit?

Emphasis on reading and writing has been widely evidenced across the curriculum and in test scores. Counseling goals have been successfully implemented as well.

f) What significant progress has the school made in addressing the major recommendations of the previous Visiting Team and/or review team?

The Visiting Team commends Piute High School for having completed the full self-study process, and for creating and implementing a successful initial action plan. Some previous recommendations deserve renewed emphasis (especially development of indicators and assessments).

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

Positive and productive working relationships are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. It is evident that community involvement is encouraged; however, geographic implications make this difficult.

The school creates and sustains a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging.

Extensive support is provided to establish collaborative and interdependent teams are established to achieve goals.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school works to engage parents and families as partners in the learning process.

The school forges productive links with the larger academic community and supports collegial working relationships across K-16 levels of education to create a coherent and seamless instructional program for students.

Meaningful partnerships are established for collaborative networks of support with community members, to extend leaning opportunities for students, and to provide resources for support.

c) To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The school included representation from all stakeholders in the self-study.

d) How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to **all** stakeholders?

There is limited evidence that results of improvement are identified, documented, used, and communicated to all stakeholders. Greater efforts need to be made to document and communicate to all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Piute High School for taking the recommendations
 of the Visiting Team from three years ago seriously, and for following the entire
 process of the self-study.
- The Visiting Team commends Piute High for having and maintaining a culture of respect, care, and collegiality among staff.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the professional way in which it conducts business. In a rural school, it is imperative that many people do many things. It was obvious to the Visiting Team that the Piute staff is willing to "wear different hats" and do whatever it takes for students to have a successful experience.
- The Visiting Team commends Piute High and its teachers and staff for caring about students. Students told us that they feel like their teachers care about them as students and as individuals.
- The Visiting Team commends the students of Piute High. The students are generally caring, respectful, and polite.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school take the time to really edit and refine the mission, DRSLs, and action plan. Specifically, the Visiting Team recommends that Piute High:
 - Condense and refine its mission. The mission should be easily remembered (two sentences or less in length) and reflect the school's true mission.
 - Reduce the number of DRSLs. It is best to have three to four DRSLs. In addition, the DRSLs should include indicators for measuring success.
 - The action plan needs to align 100 percent with the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The action plan needs to include the following information: how each goal will be assessed, when each goal will be completed, and who is responsible for completion of each goal.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Piute High design and implement a comprehensive professional development plan. This plan should align with the school's mission, beliefs, DRSLs, and action plan. The Visiting Team further recommends that the plan have a laser-like focus on curriculum ("What should

our students know, understand, and be able to do?"), instruction ("How will we deliver content so that our students will know it, understand it, and be able to do it?"), and assessment ("How will we know our students understand the content?").

• The Visiting Team recommends that the school take a serious look at and make an analysis of its students from poverty. The students from poverty (as indicated in the school profile) have the lowest achievement levels in the school. The school may want to include this in its professional development plan, or make it an issue of study. One book that the Visiting Team suggests for possible study is *A Framework for Understanding the Culture of Poverty* by Dr. Ruby Payne.